

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A method for the application of durable press to textiles via the pre-treatment bleaching of a non-finished textile component followed by the application of a durable press finish is provided. The method comprises the steps of treating a non-finished textile component in an aqueous bleaching solution of hydrogen peroxide and a hydrophobic activator or hydrophobic peracid for a time sufficient to bleach the textile component followed by application of the durable press finish preferably via immersion in an aqueous solution of formaldehyde, a cross linking catalyst and a silicone elastomer forming material or a solution of alkylene urea and a crosslinking catalyst. Preferred bleach activators include the alkanoyloxybenzene sulfonates and in particular noanoyloxybenzene sulfonate. The method allows significant savings in both energy and time due to the lower bleaching temperatures possible via the present method as opposed to conventional peroxide processing.